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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION, TERRORISM; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution and Terrorism were the major editorial themes of the daily newspapers on September 18, 2005. END SUMMARY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [1A.](#) "Our Disaster Is Not Only Reflected through Current Events but through the Silence from the Arab World and the International Community" (Al-Ittihad, 9/18)
- [1B.](#) "The Constitution between Rejection and Acceptance" (Al-Sabah Al-Jadeed, 9/18)
- [1C.](#) "A Legitimacy that Has Killed Us" (Al-Sabah, 9/18)
- [1D.](#) "Revision" (Al Bayyan, 9/18)
- [1E.](#) "Beware. The War of Authorities" (Al-Fourat, 9/18)
- [1F.](#) "Democracy and Recognizing the Rights of Constituents is the Guarantee of a Country's Unity" (Al-Ittihad, 9/18)

SELECTED COMMENTARIES

[1A.](#) "Our Disaster Is Not Only Reflected through Current Events but through the Silence from the Arab World and the International Community"
(Al-Ittihad, no bias, affiliated with PUK led by Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim, published this page-three column, by Abdul Hadi Mahdy)

"The widespread and violent activities that struck Baghdad last Wednesday and Thursday are no different from past ones but because of their repetition and devastation, all who care about the future of this country need to act quickly and act on moral and national responsibilities to halt the violence and end the suffering of innocent Iraqi victims. These violent events have no logic or ideology on which they draw upon.

"Iraqis are steadfast people who history has enlightened with steadfastness and endowed with an ability for sacrifice. Iraqis were torchbearers and many followed their blazing light. They have fulfilled a basic role in helping others but the current events have left them alone in facing their tragedies and enduring the consequences-their Arab brothers are still asleep and have let the people of Iraq down. They actually need to see what is happening to this country rather than let it face car bombs, explosive belts, beheadings, and random murders. To them it looks as though Iraq is another planet and their silence is equal to condoning the genocide that Iraqis face.

"Even the international community has abandoned Iraq--there have been only statements and promises from it and no real activity to help Iraqis through their tragedy. The United Nations has intervened to avert chaos and disasters in many parts of the world and what is happening in Iraq is more than significant than in many other places but the U.N. hasn't taken any action. So when anyone mentions the tragedy in Iraq our response is that the real tragedy is the silence and the abandonment of the Iraqi people. Unfortunately the international community and our Arab brothers look at events in Iraq as if they were segments from an action film, underscoring their lack of care and concern.

"If Iraqis are united in facing these endless tragedies they may be able to stop them but the point is, Iraqis don't like to see accusations and infighting on the part of the government-we've seen that this doesn't yield positive results. If the low performance of Iraqi security forces is the problem or the presence of MNF is a catalyst for violence then ultimately the problem is a lack of Iraqi unity. We don't need statements that raise the specter of sectarianism, which is what's been happening lately on the Iraqi street-sectarianism hurts us all. We need to think deeply about finding solutions for the problems within the Iraqi soul, and we need to avoid the narrow-mindedness that inhibits and constricts the future of Iraq."

[1B.](#) "The Constitution between Rejection and Acceptance"
(Al-Sabah Al-Jadeed, independent, pro-coalition, published this page-eight editorial by Haidar Al-Said Salman)

"The Iraqi constitution, written by the people's

representatives, faces serious challenges. Differences among several political groups reflect directly on the constitution--conservatives are committed to principles which some might see as inappropriate in the new Iraq, while on the other side, we find liberals who see most of the constitution's items as the basis for a state of justice, law, and democracy. And between these two groups are Iraqis who are in a state of bewilderment and are the ones who will either accept or reject the draft in the upcoming referendum.

"In such a case, we should make use of the time remaining to provide a simple explanation of the 153 items of the constitution, avoiding the political terminology that only experienced constitutional experts comprehend.

"I'm sure citizens will find guarantees in the constitution that safeguard their lives and the lives of their children and will discover the doubts of skeptical parties will fail to stand in the way of a constitution that leaves the door open for future amendments and changes which should eliminate any fears surround it. Any careful reading of the draft leaves a good impression regarding its ability to address the diverse nature of Iraqi society and an air of transparency in dealing with the future. A new permanent constitution for the country will be the cornerstone for the political process and lay the tracks for the right path towards a better tomorrow."

[1C. "A Legitimacy that Has Killed Us"](#)

(Al-Sabah newspaper, affiliated with the pro-coalition Iraqi Media Network, published this front-page editorial by Juma Al-Hilfi)

"The only thing left to do is to indulge in a philosophical discussion with Al-Zarqawi about the legitimacy of shedding our blood and the blood of our children and families--especially since this bloodshed is justified by jihad.

"This is what some parties actually want, they no longer see any harm in brutal blood baths that victimize hundreds of innocent civilians, and they can't even raise a finger in protest to Al-Zarqawi, all they can do is to mention his name in reverence. These parties that have made a great fuss about jihad against the occupation don't even fear public announcement of their association with Al-Zarqawi; they only consider fighting the occupation through their satellite channel statements while their car bombs know better who to kill.

"Hundreds of Iraqis have fallen during the last few weeks through car bombs and suicide vests that have killed only a few occupation soldiers; we need to discuss the legitimacy and the meaning of killing."

[1D. "Revision"](#)

(Al Bayyan, affiliated with Al-Dawa, led by Al-Ja'afari, no bias, published this page-five editorial by Zainab Al-Khafaji)

"The head of the Iraqi Islamic Party, Tariq Al-Hashimi, has accused the U.S. of marginalizing the role of Sunnis in the political process but I believe this marginalization is a result of their own actions in imposing conditions rather than requests which overlook the basic nature of the constitutional process which is the role of the people-Sunni actions are aimed at dragging Iraqis back 35 years.

"So, any party seeking participation in the political process should take into account the well-being of Iraq and work on developing political dialogue with a long-term strategy for every topic discussed. Any requests should be supported by justifications that they'll serve the interests of Iraqis.

"Therefore I believe that Mr. Al-Hashimi's statement is politically inaccurate and based on archaic and traditional political methodology such as unilateral decision making and excluding all others which isn't an approach that suits today's world. The political process in Iraq has revealed many examples of exploitation of the democratic environment, where instead of searching for common ground to unify different parties and groups the agenda has been to find points of difference that prevent any agreement."

[1E. "Beware. The War of Authorities"](#)

(Al-Fourat, independent, secular, anti-coalition, published this page-three editorial by Abdul Zahra Al-Talqani)

"Dear Sirs,

"To you who have drafted the constitution and specified your authorities according to your posts:

"Now that you have completed the draft and handed it over to the U.N. to be printed and distributed among Iraqis, you have no right to argue among yourselves about drafts that specify each person's powers. And if you are the ones who

have transformed Iraq into democracy, you have no right to dispute what was previously agreed upon.

"The world has watched us welcome the occupation to liberate us from dictatorship, and watched us loot our government buildings and civilization, watched us living in darkness with no electricity, and watched us blow up our oil pipelines. As if all of this weren't enough, the world now gets the chance to see our president and PM contest over who gets to represent Iraq at the U.N. to show their public speaking skills as they did before during King Fahad's funeral in August.

"Why can't we reflect an image of a civilized nation going through a renaissance? We've clutched on to history until we've become a part of it. When will we move forward towards the present and learn from other nations, learn how they live, how they learn, eat, drink, enjoy life, make use of science and develop their world.

"We have taught the world before, and now we need to learn from them; we were their teachers now they are ours, we need to learn how to live freely, and abide by the law. We need to learn how to run our country and replace our rulers peacefully; enough bargaining over our country--enough loss and bewilderment."

F. "Democracy and Recognizing the Rights of Constituents is the Guarantee of a Country's Unity"
(Al-Ittihad, affiliated with PUK, pro-coalition, published this page-eight editorial by Farhad Rashid)

"The Japanese-American intellectual [Francis] `Fukuyama,' the End of History theorist, doesn't need to consider himself as a purely American citizen or to claim his Japanese ancestry since he lives in a country that treats him as a first-class citizen without regard to his national or religious affiliation.

"This is an indication that the American government deals fairly and without any discrimination or efforts to force a citizen to change his national identity, which is what makes Fukuyama feel at home in America despite his Japanese origins--it also causes him to feel an allegiance to the country which grants him this right.

"From this example, we can talk about the condition inside the Iraq, specifically in the talks regarding the drafting of the Iraqi constitution. Many Iraqi leaders are calling for a united Iraq (no division of land) and urging constituents to maintain the unity of land without taking into consideration national or personal interests. Yet it's the Kurdish people who have been exposed to destruction and harm by the former regime that ordered them to stop pushing for their national rights in an effort to keep Iraq integrated. The Kurds have been accused by some of parties to be working toward dividing Iraq simply because they insist on pushing their national demands.

"I can see that merely claiming to have Iraqi lands unified is not enough to achieve that purpose, and that any step to build a unified Iraq requires preparation. The Kurds should understand that their rights are secure and it is better to live in a small country that lacks the essential conditions for a modern country than to live in a large prosperous country. The best strategy for keeping a country intact is to make people feel secure, safe, and stable without forcing them to co-opt their identity or threatening to deport them--this is the equation for democratic and peaceful living.

"We can also see that countries that are unified under the banner of the European Union are all self-governing and have achieved unity in the form of federalism. When the leaders of these countries see that the rights of their people are guaranteed then there is no need to force people to live inside a country's borders. That will not ensure a strong country. With all due respect to those who call for the Kurds to be `more Palestinian than Yasir Arafat' or `more Catholic than the Pope' they should remember that principles do not feed ideas nor do they feed bodies."

SATTERFIELD